

City of Chandler Mayor's Youth Commission

Teen Town Hall 2012 Report



Chandler City Council

Mayor

Jay Tibshraeny

Vice Mayor

Jeff Weninger

Councilmembers

Trinity Donovan

Kevin Hartke

Rick Heumann

Matt Orlando

Jack Sellers

Mayor's Youth Commission 2011-12

Officers

Stephen Bergauer, Chairperson

Jake Sullivan, Vice Chairperson

Ude Iheduru, Secretary

Casey Carrigan, Historian

Sanjay Srinivasan, Points Commissioner

Commission Members

Katherine Campagna

Jonathan Chien

Sharae DeWitt

Atharva Dhole

Allison Fassinger

Christopher Hacnik

Arjun Karpur

Judy Nguyan

Varun Ramesh

Ilesha Sevak

Rushi Shah

Mary Sulaiman

Kevin Walberg

Andrew Yuwen

Honorary Members

Tejas Dharmaraj

Isheen Mehta

Abhishek Patel

Manav Sevak

Staff Liaison

Erika Berry, Recreation Coordinator II

The Mayor's Youth Commission would like to extend a special thanks to Floridino's Pizza and Pasta, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Fry's Food Stores, and Safeway for their donations used to provide breakfast and lunch, and the City of Chandler for giveaway items and for providing the use of the Council Chambers and other space in City Hall for the day's activities. These businesses and organizations allowed the Teen Town Hall event to be a success.



Mayor Jay Tibshraeny and the Chandler City Council

Teen Town Hall

April 5, 2012



Hosted by the City of Chandler Mayor's Youth Commission

Schedule

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Arrival and Registration
City Hall Council Chambers

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Opening Session – City Hall Council Chambers
Special Guest Speakers:
Mayor Jay Tibshraeny
Darren Cummings, President of Cummings Engineering
Team Building Activity – Abel Mendoza

9:25 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Committee Sessions
Healthy Habits – City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Rm. A
Media Influences – City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Rm. B
Teen Depression – City Hall 3rd Floor Large Conference Rm.
Tolerance – City Hall 4th Floor Medium Conference Rm.

11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Lunch (provided by Floridino's Pizza & Pasta)
City Hall Mezzanine

12:15 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.

Committee Sessions Resume

1:30 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.

Committee Session Presentations
City Hall Council Chambers

1:50 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Closing Session
City Hall Council Chambers

During the committee sessions, participants will be divided into groups and assigned an issue from the list above that affects local teens today. Teen Town Hall aims for each of these groups to propose an effective plan of solution for the given issue. The recommendations will later be compiled into a report and given to the Mayor and Council for their consideration. The goal of the Teen Town Hall is to immerse high school students in the local government action process, expose them to issues affecting teens today, and empower them to help in creating solutions for these issues.

Thank you to



for sponsoring today's event.

The Mayor's Youth Commission sponsored its fourth annual Teen Town Hall on Thursday, April 5, 2012 at Chandler's City Hall. The purpose of the Teen Town Hall is to bring together teenagers from the community to discuss issues of concern to Chandler's teens and offer recommendations for practical solutions the community can implement. To ensure input from all sectors of our community, individuals from numerous private and public high schools and non-profit groups within the City of Chandler were invited to participate.

The Teen Town Hall began with Mayor's Youth Commission members Athrava Dhole and Varun Ramesh welcoming the participants and then introducing Mayor Jay Tibshraeny. Mayor Tibshraeny addressed the participants, stating he was excited to see their interest and involvement in the event. He encouraged the participants to engage in the day's activities and said he looked forward to the presentation of the Teen Town Hall Report at a future City Council meeting. Mayor Tibshraeny's speech was followed by a keynote address by Mr. Darren Cummings, the president of Cummings Engineering located in Chandler. Mr. Cummings challenged the participants to think about how their involvement can make a difference in their community. An energizing team-building activity led by Abel Mendoza, Recreation Coordinator for the City of Chandler, concluded the opening session. Participants were then divided into four discussion groups covering different topics that the Commission had chosen earlier based on last year's survey. The discussion group topics included **Healthy Habits, Media Influences, Teen Depression, and Tolerance.**

Participants met in their groups and began discussion of their assigned topics by defining the problem and possible contributing factors. The groups were then asked to focus on solutions to address the issue and develop practical recommendations that could be easily implemented within the City of Chandler.

In the closing session, one or more teen spokespersons from each of the discussion groups presented his/her committee's recommendations to all the Town Hall participants. Each teen presented his/her topic, several recommendations, how these recommendations were to be carried out, and who should implement the suggestions. These presentations provided attendees the opportunity to gain understanding and insight from one another. Sanjay Srinivasen, a member of the Mayor's Youth Commission, closed the day by thanking all the dignitaries and participants for attending. He informed the participants that all their hard work would be compiled into a report.

This Teen Town Hall report will be made available to various agencies, organizations, clubs and schools for review, and will be used as a resource in our community. The Teen Town Hall event provides both teens and adults the opportunity to communicate openly with one another about important issues that affect them.

The following pages provide details on each of the four topics of discussion at this year's Teen Town Hall, as well as the specific recommendations for change created by each group.

Healthy Habits

Discussion Summary:

The discussion focused on the general health of Chandler students, the community and social education standards. Top issues were ones student encounter on a daily basis and have an effect on everyone on a broad scale. Collectively, these social issues included drugs, abuse, pressures, obesity rates, physical education, car safety, sex, pregnancy, suicide, education, and finances. The group focused on health and the establishment of programs that instill the importance of physical, mental, and psychological health. A student's diet, education, behavior, and even sexuality are paramount issues in our community. To address these issues, the group's recommendations included offering seminars for parents on obesity, encouraging positive student behavior, holding a healthy school competition, and restructuring the Chandler Unified School District's sexual education program.

Recommendations:

1. Seminars for parent on obesity

The goal of these seminars is to instill and reinforce healthy habits in parents, who in turn would be able to teach their children healthy habits. Parents will be given implementation plans to follow at home. If started at a young age, children will have the skills to make good choices resulting in a healthier community. To implement this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District would organize the seminars, which would be held at schools, Chandler recreation centers and libraries. The program would be funded with in-kind donations.

2. Encourage positive student behavior

The goal of this program is to improve student behavior towards school and one another. To encourage good behavior, the Chandler Unified School District would establish a district wide disciplinary system that each school would follow. At the end of each school year, the school with the least disciplinary actions would be recognized.

3. Healthy food competition

To advocate fitness and healthy eating, an in-school healthy food competition would be established. The goal of the competition would be to educate students on the steps they need to take to live a healthy lifestyle. The competition would be carried out by the Chandler Unified School District through the reimplementation of the Presidential Fitness test during health and physical education classes. The test would be given at the beginning and end of each school year. Students will be able to track their progress and make changes to their diet and exercise programs as needed.

4. Restructuring of the school district's sex education program

To provide teens with proper information about sex education, the group recommends the restructuring of the Chandler Unified School District's sex education program. The group recognized that abstinence is the best solution for teens, but a more comprehensive curriculum that includes the consequences of having sex and how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases would be more realistic. To implement this recommendation, the Chandler Unified School District would require the sex education

program to be under the Science Department and would use evidence-based information provided by non-profit organizations that can provide facts to the students.

Addressing Healthy Habits

Facilitators:

Lindsey Robertson, Chandler Regional Hospital
Casey Carrigan, Mayor's Youth Commission Member
Allison Fassinger, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Teen Participants

Robert Alimor, Hamilton High School
Mitchell Behling, Hamilton Prep
Jessica Blue, Hamilton Prep
Joey Cardinal, Perry High School
Antonio Coronado, Chandler High School
David Duhart, Basha High School
Sydney Haugen, Perry High School
Thomas Ibrahim, Seton High School
Larry James, El Dorado High School
Yassine Mazboudi, Hamilton Prep
Christina Poletti, Hamilton High School
Kyr's Provins, Perry High School
Giannina Rodriguez, Basha High School
Danielle Rossi, Chandler Early College
Brandon Shirk, Hamilton Prep
Quinn Thibeault, Chandler High School
Alexandria Thompson, Hamilton High School
Tyler Vanklompenberg, Perry High School

Media Influence

Discussion Summary:

The group began the discussion by identifying what media influence means to them. Participants discussed how the media influences almost everything in their lives from their culture, clubs and body image, to how they dress and engage in life. While there are many ways the media influences teens, participants felt cyber bullying, sexting, and peer pressure are the most prevalent in our community. Some possible solutions for these issues may involve the creation of anti-bullying clubs at schools, informing students of the effects of sexting, and providing more leadership opportunities.

Recommendations:

1. Creation of anti-bullying clubs

This program would educate students about bullying to include cyber bullying and sexting and raise awareness about negative cell phone and social network use. To implement this recommendation, Improving Chandler Area Neighborhoods (ICAN) and the Chandler Unified School District would work together to establish these clubs at schools. Chandler Unified School District would agree to host the clubs at school and supply a sponsor teacher. ICAN would be responsible for marketing the clubs through an outreach program and possibly through billboard advertisements.

2. Add the effects of sexting on teens to the Chandler Unified School District's curriculum

To raise awareness of how sexting affects high school teens, students will be given information every year about the repercussions of sexting, including legal consequences. Informative videos about sexting will be shown during science class. The recommendation would be carried out by Chandler Unified School District science teachers. The program cost would be the purchase of the educational videos.

3. Create an online newsletter listing leadership opportunities

To combat peer pressure and give teens the resources to find and celebrate their individualism, Chandler teens would be encouraged by their school to attend leadership conferences. To provide more leadership opportunities to Chandler teens, an online newsletter will be created listing existing leadership conferences. This newsletter will include opportunities that are not restricted by academic qualifications to give all students an opportunity to improve their self-esteem and focus on self-discovery in hopes to combat internet peer pressure. To implement this recommendation, Chandler Unified School District principals would compile the conference information and post the information on their schools website.

Addressing Media Influences

Facilitators:

Katie Hurst, Gangplank HQ

Vaurn Ramesh, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Kevin Walberg, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Youth Participants

Anthony Antell, Chandler High School
Megan Crenshaw, Perry High School
Ashlyn Deem, Basha High School
Kyle Fisher, Hamilton High School
Kristen Floyd, Hamilton High School
Jorge Garcia, Desert Hills High School
Tyler Hall, El Dorado High School
Raymie Humbert, Seton High School
Emilty Jojola, Hamilton Prep
Alexis LaBenz, Perry High School
Cassie Langenharst, Perry High School
Jesus Lomeli, El Dorado High School
Nicholas Lowery, Perry High School
Kevin Mandzak, Hamilton Prep
Brandon Marxman, Basha High School
Kaitlyn Rauschenberger, Basha High School
Tanner Sims, Hamilton High School
Brianna Steele, Chandler High School
Cathryn Stein, Perry High School
Alex Stovall, Chandler Early College
Ethan Thompson, Perry High School

Teen Depression

Discussion Summary:

This group discussed where teen depression starts and what can cause it. Among teens in Arizona, nine percent have suffered a major episode of depression. The group felt contributing factors to teen depression are fights, hormones, loss, genetics, and different beliefs. Key issues identified include the lack of knowledge about depression or the signs to look for, as the topic is not discussed at schools or by most parents. To combat these issues, the group recommendations including the introduction to what depression is at a young age and continued discussions on the topic, educating teachers and parents to notice signs of depression and provide resources, mandating schools to have a set number of mental health awareness days devoted to discussions, and establishing a citywide support system.

Recommendations:

1. Educate teachers, parents, and teens at an early age about teen depression and provide more resources

Often, depression is not talked about by teachers or parents, which can inhibit early detection. As a result, teens do not recognize the symptoms or feel comfortable seeking help. Educating teachers, teens, and parents early in teen development will help remove the stigma about depression, making it easier for people to find help. To improve awareness, the state of Arizona would implement a marketing campaign and distribute signs, posters, and other materials to the public. In conjunction, the Chandler Unified School District would offer courses, conferences, and seminars about depression led by professionals at schools or other city locations.

2. Create mental health awareness days at schools

Teen depression can lead to other high-risk behavior such as drug and alcohol use, or can even lead to suicide. Arizona is ranked ninth in the nation for teen suicide. Since teens spend a third of their day at school, it would be a good place to teach helpful techniques and have significant discussions on mental health issues. To implement this recommendation, the Chandler Unified School District would have a set number of mental health awareness days similar to the sexual education and drug awareness programs currently taught.

3. Establish a citywide teen depression support group

To help people know they are not alone, a citywide teen depression support group would be created. The goal would be to decrease depression and the number of teen suicides in the Chandler area. To achieve this recommendation, the City of Chandler would hire staff who would operate a hotline, which would be advertised through flyers, signs and other forms of media. This program would be funded through a grant and donations and implemented by City of Chandler staff.

Addressing Teen Depression Facilitators:

Alicia Celis, Teen Life Line

Christopher Hacanik, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Manav Sevak, Mayor's Youth Commission Member

Youth Participants

Alex Aispuro-Aguilar, Chandler High School
Elias Aguilar, Chandler High School
Sydni Bussell, Chandler High School
Samantha Clark, Basha High School
Kelsey Culver, Hamilton High School
Alec Davidson, Perry High School
Kourtney Dunning, Perry High School
Jessica Escandon, Chandler High School
Taylor Imburgia, Chandler Early College
Jiwon Kim, Seton High School
Kaitlyn Loop, Hamilton Prep
Jack Murray, Hamilton High
Jordan Neubauer, Perry High School
Ryan Nguyen, Perry High School
Lauren Ranta - McDonald, Basha High School
Tyler Rebe, Basha High School
Mark Siadat, Seton High School
Tayler Soefje, Hamilton Prep
Christy Thomas, Hamilton Prep
Elizabeth Van De Moere, Basha High School

Tolerance

Discussion Summary:

Group members began the day by discussing what it means to be tolerant, the primary cause of intolerance, how to solve the problem of people being intolerant, and how culture affects Chandler as a community. The state of Arizona is currently ranked 43rd as the least tolerant state in the country. The group recognized that ignorance is what causes intolerance. This can be improved by making personal connections and expanding comfort zones. To improve Chandler, citizens need to be educated about the diversity in Chandler. The group recommends the implementation of a Chandler Tolerance Day and the creation of tolerance clubs by the Chandler Unified School District.

Recommendations:

1. Chandler Tolerance Day

The purpose of Chandler Tolerance Day would be to help citizens make connections to build a community of tolerance. The Tolerance Day would be a chance for citizens to gather and celebrate their differences. Clubs from Chandler Unified School District and other organizations would be invited to host booths at city events to spread awareness. To implement this recommendation, the group suggests City Council proclaim a “Tolerance Day.” The day could be held in conjunction with the City of Chandler Multi-Cultural Festival.

2. Creation of tolerance clubs at schools

Schools have an increasingly diverse student body and it is important for students to embrace their differences. The creation of tolerance clubs would allow students to organize and execute educational events advocating tolerance among their peers and among Chandler citizens. To create these clubs, the group recommends the Chandler Unified School District create a tolerance club at each Chandler high school.

Addressing Tolerance

Facilitators:

Karen Jacques, Chandler Early College teacher
Atharva Dhole, Mayor’s Youth Commission Member

Youth Participants

Anil Adharapurapu, Chandler High School
Adrian Aguilar, Chandler High School
Haley Albrecht, Perry High School
Chole Alexander, Hamilton High School
Davis Allen, Perry High School
Paula Beatty, Hamilton Prep
Adam Ciampagleo, Chandler High School
Katie Dellis, Hamilton Prep
Kasey Dragon, Perry High School
Taylor Dunkle, Basha High School
Alec Heikkala, Chandler High School
Yasmeen Hussain, Hamilton High School

Kayla Lucas, Perry High School
Caroline Manrubia, Hamilton Prep
James Olguin, Perry High School
Danielle Parlich, Basha High School
Antonio Peralta, Basha High School
Kelsey Rind, Chandler Early College
Abigail Reed, Hamilton High School
Korinna Romero, Seton High School
Lynsey Sasso, Basha High School